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ABSTRACT

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY IN CONNECTICUT IS BRIEFLY REVIEWED WITH REFERENCE TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING AID PROGRAM. SPECIAL ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE 1965 LEGISLATURE AND THE 1967 GENERAL ASSEMBLY ARE ENUMERATED. A STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF AID UNDER THE PROGRAM IS PRESENTED. (FPO)

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CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Bureau of School Buildings
Hartford

A Brief History

of the

PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING AID PROGRAM
in
CONNECTICUT

From 1945 to Present

EF 001 984

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PUBLIC SCHCOL BUILDING AID IN CONNECTICUT

1945 through 1968

The regular session of the 1945 General Assembly enacted the first bill providing Public School Building Aid. Through the medium of a Public School Building Commission, lump sum grants were allowed for building, remodeling or enlarging any public elementary or secondary school. This first grant was limited to $150 per pupil or 1/3 of the total cost of the project. The total cost excluded site acquisition cost. The maximum allowable grant was $50,000. The 1947 General Assembly increased this grant formula to $250 per pupil, but retained the 1/3-of-cost maximum and the over all maximum of $50,000.

The November 1949 Special Session drastically revised this whole program. The original Public School Building Commission was reorganized. A new higher formula was established applying retroactively to all projects started since the beginning of the original program in 1945. The new formula provided a $300 grant per pupil for elementary schools and a $450 grant per pupil for secondary schools with a maximum limitation of 1/3 of the total cost, again excluding site acquisition cost. In the case of major alterations not involving new or extended facilities, the grant was to be 1/3 of the necessary cost, as determined by the Commission. Since the new formula was retroactive, lump sum payments made under the old program were subtracted from those to be made under the new formula.

Especially noteworthy in the 1949 amendments was the new payment procedure established. Standard grant payments thereafter were made in equal annual installments over a twenty year period. Adjusted payment schedules were provided for certain retroactive grants and provision was made for payment in five annual installments where a project was fully paid for (i.e., no bond issue). In 1951 the latter provision was modified to include a grant that was less than $10,000.

The 1949 law further included a hardship grant provision for those towns unable to finance a needed project even with the assistance provided by the standard grant. At this time, however, the hardship clause did not specifically include regional school districts. This provision has been continued in the present law, although Department records disclose that four grants have been approved under this provision since the inception of the program, but only three towns ever received a payment. In an effort to further assist the towns in handling their own public school building programs, the General Assembly in 1947 authorized the extension of municipal borrowing power beyond the standard statutory limits, for the purposes of school construction. In 1953 the General Assembly merged the separate Public School Building Commission into the State Board of Education and further simplified the procedure for review of plans by the State Board prior to approval of the requested grant.

The basic 1949 formula was not changed until 1957 regular session, at which time the aid amount for any project completed and approved after January 1,1957, was increased to $500 per elementary school pupil and $700 per secondary school pupil for any new school or extension, subject to a limitation of 1/2 the total cost excluding site acquisition cost. For projects involving major alterations, the grant continued at 1/3 of the necessary cost as determined by the State Board. In the case of a regional school district building a new or extended facility, the grant was to be increased by fifteen (15) per cent. The hardship grant provision and the provision for payment in twenty yearly installments (five years, if the

project is fully paid for, or if the grant is under $10,000) was continued. A special session of the 1957 Legislature amended the hardship clause to include regional school districts. Grants for extensions to existing schools were modified so that computations were based upon (1) increase of pupil capacity or one-half the project cost or (2), one-third the necessary cost, whichever is greater.

Throughout the entire building aid program, school building projects have had to be approved by the local board of education and the building committee of such town. From 1945 until 1953 the Public School Building Commission, as well as the State Department of Education, approved all plans and specifications. Upon the abolition of the Public School Building Commission and the transfer of its functions to the State Department of Education in 1953, actual approval of plans was eliminated and the State Department of Education was required to review all final plans and specifications for conformity with the State Fire Safety Code and the State Sanitary Code. Also, a written report, together with the recommendations of the State Board of Education, has to be made to the town school authorities. The Department was further authorized to maintain an advisory school planning service.

In 1959, the Legislature directed that a School Construction Economy Service be maintained by the State Board of Education. This act became effective on July 1, 1959. The action strengthened the department's services by providing for more extensive architectural consulting services; collection, publication and distribution of information on procedures for school building committees; building methods and materials suitable for school construction; and on relevant educational methods, requirements and materials.

The State Board of Education was also authorized to appoint a School Construction Economy Service Advisory Committee, which it did. This Committee gives advice and makes recommendations to the State Board regarding the purposes of the new act.

The Act establishing the Economy Service also required that a set of standards for schoolhouse construction be established. Further, preliminary plans and specifications must be reviewed starting July 1, 1960 in light of the established standards of construction and a report on such reviews made to the local officials and agencies involved in each school construction project to receive a grant.

In addition to the Economy Service, the 1959 Legislature provided an Act Concerning School Building Projects to Include Regional Vocational-Agriculture Centers, effective October 1, 1959. This act modified the School Building Aid Law to: (1) include regional vocational-agriculture centers in the definition of a secondary school building; (2) limiting the number of approved applications for regional vocational-agriculture centers in any one year to two, and the total grants approved in any one year to $300,000, except with approval of the governor; (3) provide for payment of the total cost of such project to be made in one payment.

The 1963 Legislature modified the Building Aid Law to provide a lump sum payment for all grants approved under $10,000 rather than payments over a five year period.

In spite of the many modifications of the Public School Building Aid Law and the increases in building aid to the school districts of Connecticut, increasing

enrollments, providing for underprivileged children, replacement of obsolete buildings, the maintenance of existing buildings, and the remodeling of old buildings increasingly brought about financial pressures on the school districts, which were more and more difficult to handle. In view of these increased financial pressures the 1965 Legislature saw fit to provide a sizeable increase in aid to education. Among many of the very favorable actions undertaken, were the following:

a. The aid formula was increased to $700 per elementary pupil station and $1100 per secondary pupil station, limited to 1/2 the project cost. Regional school aid was increased to 25% above that for municipalities. The number of payments was made the same as the number of bond payments.

b. $300,000 was made available for two occupational training centers during the 1965-67 biennium.

c. "Middle" schools were encouraged by providing for secondary aid rate to be paid on facilities for grades five and six under specified circumstances.

d. The question as to whether a local board of education member could serve on a school building committee was resolved affirmatively.

e. Authority to specify grant application procedures given the State Board.

f. Accessibility of school buildings by handicapped persons was prescribed, effective 8/16/66.

g. $100,000 was made available for two regional centers for mentally retarded pupils during the 1965-67 biennium.

h. Anti-discrimination provisions were prescribed for all public school building contracts.

The 1967 General Assembly again made substantial increases in aid to educational construction as well as providing other pertinent legislation, as follows:

1 The aid formula was raised to $900 per elementary pupil station and $1400 per secondary pupil station. Pupil stations provided in specialized elementary facilities became eligible for an additional $200.

2. "Elementary" was defined as grades six and below; "secondary" was defined as grades seven through twelve.

3. All extension and alteration grants to be one-half project cost.

4. Grants outstanding on 7/1/68 for projects approved prior to 7/1/67 to be paid at a rate computed on the new formula.

5. New regional grade 7-12 projects to get grants equal to 70% of project cost; new regional K-12 projects to receive 80% of project cost.

6. Regular grants to be increased by 50% of the necessary cost of related site acquisition.

7. $300,000 was made available for occupational training facilities during the 1967-69 biennium.

8. $400,000 was provided for assisting the establishment of regional educational centers for exceptional children.

9. "extension", "major alteration", "completed school building project", and "date of beginning of construction" were defined by statute.

10. $400,000 were provided for two vocational-agriculture centers during the 1967-69 biennium.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Bureau of School Buildings Hartford

RLH 5-68

1945-1968

CONNECTICUT PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING AID (Buildings-Form 4 Approved)

Year	Public School Enrollment	No. of Building Projects Completed	Addtl. Pupil Capacity Rating	Total Cost (Excl. Sites	Total State Grant Liability Approved in Year	Actual Cash Amount of State Grants Paid in Year
1945-46	-	-	-	-	-	-
1946-47	252,011	2	180	$ 42,891.01	$ 14,296.99	$ 2,417,934.38
1947-48	258,859	11	1,370	1,391,455.95	432,723.88	(Total payments
1948-49	265,267	28	5,910	7,510,023.27	1,936,551.88	in period
1949-50	274,885	28	5,380	8,027,399.47	1,769,397.56	1945-50)
1950-51	283,583	77	13,800	21,690,424.93	5,520,006.19	474,264.76
1951-52	299,197	65	10,803	16,467,984.37	4,099,750.79	715,204.85
1952-53	321,198	30	6,528	10,465,345.16	2,554,080.31	836,217.02
1953-54	341,630	78	24,116	42,151,044.73	9,983,380.27	1,514,096.42
1954-55	361,786	80	22,785	35,019,220.90	7,270,625.48	1,956,776.10
1955-56	380,322	79	23,432	33,875,480.31	9,547,341.91	2,436,023.34
1956-57	398,487	76	22,525	27,850,153.75	8,647,262.86	2,963,815.10
1957-58	422,333	103	31,187	46,755,221.08	21,344,355.63	3,947,944.13
1958-59	440,832	95	32,912	51,777,999.95	20,148,354.58	4,803,312.54
1959-60	459,676	113	33,819	53,299,267.07	20,520,170.23	5,801,093.44
1960-61	481,629	122	38,040	58,367,779.14	23,368,740.76	7,068,966.70
1961-62	499,178	111	24,592	37,196,691.40	15,103,711.53	8,148,014.28
1962-63	520,930	79	23,356	33,989,476.85	14,313,044.46	8,720,163.86
1963-64	543,480	77	35,208	59,498,696.53	23,254,547.47	10,104,104.28
1964-65	560,079	77	27,866	48,701,814.22	16,883,988.90	11,095,389.87
1965-66	575,000(est.)	113	36,223	69,412,490.77	31,838,414.90	12,525,192.48
1966-67	590,895	57	27,130	40,680,567.35	19,413,061.26	13,641,381.88
1967-68	615,554	69	30,258	37,676,159.86	18,237,153.48	14,734,800.75
		1,570	477,420	$ 741,847,588.07	$ 276,200,961.32	$ 113,904,696.18

(Alteration projects included)